2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

578 when the whole tribe, save the squaws and papooses, assembled on a level piece of ground a mile from the village. Here they formed a large ring, into which walked the Rolling Thunder and Han-na-nos-ka-a, the prophet. The latter pronounced a long discourse, setting forth, as nearly as my imperfect knowledge of the language enabled me to comprehend, the original cause of the quarrel, a detailed account of its progress, the inability of the council to agree upon a satisfactory arrangement, and that, finally, it had been referred to the just decision of the Great Spirit, into whose presence their implacable brethren were now about to appear.

Having concluded, the brothers of the young warriors conducted them into the ring. One of them was, perhaps, twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, the other four or five years older. The younger was somewhat the largest, though both were remarkably athletic and powerful. When [284] they reached the center of the ring, meeting from opposite directions, their left arms, as far up as the elbow, were firmly lashed together with stout, thick cords of buffalo hide. They were bound so thoroughly that the possibility of breaking away from each other was utterly beyond question.

Into the right hand of each was then placed a hunting [412] knife, having a heavy buckhorn handle and a blade about nine inches long, evidently prepared for the occasion by being brought to a keen edge on both sides. The brothers then withdrew some twenty feet from the combatants, drawing from their belts similar knives, when the signal was given and the fight began. After that there was no call of "time"—no retreating to the "corner"—no planting the left heavily on the "mug"—they "toed the scratch" but once, and ended the combat in a single "round."

180 of the head at the front. The designs are long, interlocking triangles of the larger size embroidering beads, sometimes referred to as "pony beads," sewn to the base in a lazy stitch. The triangles pointing forward are of sky blue and those directed backward of white beads. Toward the back of the cap a band of clipped turkey vulture feathers extends over the top, behind which are sewn short narrow strips of rabbit skin. Much longer strips of rabbit skin, each tied to the lower edge of the red cloth, serve as dangling pendants from each side of the cap.

The trailer consists of 43 secondary wing feathers of the immature golden eagle. The uppermost six feathers are tied to the back of the cap. Each feather is secured in place by passing it through a hole in a strip of rawhide (2 cm. wide), looping the basal end of the feather around a buckskin cord, and wrapping it with sinew. The slotted rawhide strip through which the feathers pass serves as a spacer to keep the feathers an equal distance apart.

In view of the known relationship between the Comanche and Shoshoni, it is of interest to find similar caps worn by Shoshoni Indians pictured in Alfred Jacob Miller's drawings and paintings based upon his visit to the fur traders' rendezvous in Wyoming during the summer of 1837.[15]

Although a Comanche warrior may have worn this feathered headdress in battle, there is no reason to believe it was more or less typical of Comanche war headgear than several other types. The headdress of the famous Comanche war chief, Cuerna Verde (Green Horn), was described as early as 1768 as "a green horn on his forehead, fixed in a headdress, or on a tanned leather head piece."[16] A two-horned bonnet captured from the Comanche who raided Corpus Christi, in June 1844 is depicted in Figure 18. A Lino Sánchez y Tapia's watercolor of Comanche warriors (Plate 3)[B] shows both a horned buffalo hide cap and a bonnet of upright plumes. David G. Burnet, who knew the Comanche in 1819, wrote of them, "The head-dress is as various as their fancies can suggest and their means supply. Parrow-a-fifty's parade head-dress was a cap made of the scalp of a buffalo bull, with the horns attached in proper position. . . . They sometimes load their heads with feathers, arranged in lofty plumes, or dangling in the air in pensile confusion, or wove into an immense hood."[17] It is apparent that individual preference was reflected in the variety of Comanche headgear worn prior to 1850.

Feather Ornaments Figures 30-31

A circular ornament composed of 57 clipped turkey vulture feathers, carefully strung on a thin buckskin cord by doubling the end of each feather around the cord and tieing it securely with sinew, is shown in Figure 30.

15. Ross, 1951, pp. 54, 127, 199.
16. Thomas, 1940, p. 167.
17. Burnet (1851, p. 133) and Wallace and Hoebel (1952, pp. 82–83) claim that the well known "war bonnet" of the Plains Indians (presumably the brow-banded type) was not common among the Comanche before the 1870s.

A [See p. 169--Analyst.]
B [Plate 3 has not been processed for the Files--Analyst.]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 184]

188 y Tapia's watercolor of the Comanche man and woman.[19] Variants of this loose-fitting, poncho-like upper garment appear in Lino's watercolors of several neighboring tribes—the Lipan Apache, Tawakoni, Karankawa, and Cocos, although the Caddoan and Karankawan versions appear to be of more abbreviated form.[20]

Earlier descriptions of this type of garment in the literature suggest that it formed a part of the aboriginal costume of the women of the Southern Plains. In 1541 the Coronado expedition found the Teya women wearing "something like a sanbenitos with a fringe, which reached halfway down the thigh over the petticoat." They also found the Indian women of Sonora wearing petticoats (or skirts) of "tanned deerskin and little sanbenitos reaching half way down the body."[21] Onate noted in 1601 that in hot weather the Indian women on the plains near the Arkansas were clothed only "from the waist down."[22] Numerous references to painting and tattooing of the breasts and upper bodies by Tonkawan and Caddoan women also suggest that the poncho-like upper garment must have been commonly dispensed with in warm weather.

Nevertheless, among the Comanche this old style of skirt and poncho-like upper evolved into a skirt and blouse, laced together at the waist with buckskin thongs, before the beginning of the Reservation Period, and out earlier style is not even mentioned in Wallace and Hoebel's monographic study of the Comanche.[23] The specimen in the Berlandier Collection may be the only extant example of this earlier Comanche woman's garment.

Collar for Pet Antelope Figure 58

A collar for a pet antelope is illustrated in Figure 58. It is composed of a backing of red trade cloth to which is sewn with thread (not sinew) a strip of cloth 21 cm. long by 1.5 cm. wide, to which are sewn 62 rolled metal cones on short, individual buckskin cords. These cones made a jingling sound as they struck against each other whenever the antelope moved.

Skin Dressing Tool Figure 59

Berlandier's handwritten label, still attached to this specimen, reads in translation: "Instrument with which the Comanche Indians dress large buffalo hides." This piece (Figure 59) is a section of elk horn 27 cm. in length, which formed the handle of a woman's skin-dressing tool. The blade, of chipped stone or iron, is missing. It was fitted against the flattened inner surface of the downward-projecting head of the elk horn handle and held in place by a lashing of rawhide. Generally the lashing was applied wet, so that

19. See Plate 2.
20. See Plates 1, 13, 15, and 16.
21. Winship, 1896, pp. 507, 517. In a footnote to p. 507 the editor explains that a "sanbenito" is "a broad piece of cloth hanging before and behind" with a hole for the wearer's head.
22. Bolton, 1916, p. 258.
23. Wallace and Hoebel (1952, p. 85) describe only the later skirt and blouse in their account of Comanche women's clothing. Their field work among the Comanche was begun, however, in the 1930s. It is doubtful that even their oldest informant was born before Berlandier collected the garment described above.

[Sánchez y Tapia's watercolors have not been reproduced for the Files--Analyst.]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 N0o Comanche N06
Texas

412 it would shrink as it dried and bind the blade securely to the handle. In 189
284 using this tool to remove the hair or to chip the inner surface of a buffalo
412 hide to an even thickness, the woman stood on the hide, bent over, and, with
281 the sharp blade nearly perpendicular to the surface of the hide, performed
412 her painstaking task with vigorous strokes, holding the tool with both hands.
(171) Elk horn-handled skin-scraping tools of this kind were widely used among the Plains Indians, as well as the Shoshoni and their neighbors west of the Rockies, in historic buffalo days.[24] This may be, however, the earliest well-documented example of this useful tool from the Comanche.

24. Wissler (1910, pp. 67–68) pictures four of these adze-like tools equipped with blades and gives the tribal distribution of this type of skin-dressing implement.